



University of Huddersfield Repository

Cantle, Ted and Thomas, Paul

Taking the Think Project Forward - The Need for Preventative Anti-Extremism Educational Work

Original Citation

Cantle, Ted and Thomas, Paul (2014) Taking the Think Project Forward - The Need for Preventative Anti-Extremism Educational Work. Project Report. The Think Project, Swansea.

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/19790/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>



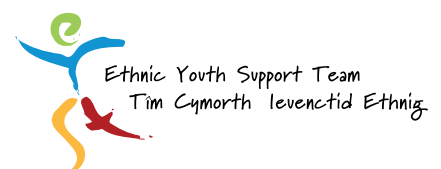
TAKING THE THINK PROJECT FORWARD

THE NEED FOR
PREVENTATIVE
ANTI-EXTREMISM
EDUCATIONAL WORK

Professor Ted Cantle, The iCoCo Foundation

Professor Paul Thomas, The University of Huddersfield

January 2014





Welcoming remarks

We are very pleased to present this report outlining the scope and potential of the 'Think Project' to combat what is arguably one of the pressing problems of our time – the threat from racism and far right extremism. Growing support for far-right groups such as the EDL, BNP, and UKIP show that this threat is real. But why people give their support to such ideas is less clear, and appears to be a mixture of misinformation and personal and economic insecurity.

As a youth organisation supporting ethnic minority young people we see on a daily basis the effects that racist bullying, abuse and victimisation have on the lives, hopes and confidence of young people and their families. The worsening economic climate, combined with growing xenophobia and Islamophobia has created an increasingly hostile social climate in which the views that 'all Muslims are terrorists', 'all asylum seekers are bogus', and 'all foreigners should go home', have now become almost normalised. But as well as offering support to victims of such racism, we also see a need to work pro-actively and preventatively to stop young people from developing such attitudes in the first place.

Our approach differs significantly from the commonly used punitive approach of 'kicking out', 'stamping out' or 'zero tolerance' to racism. As a community-based organisation we recognise the real grievances and social exclusion faced by many sections of the white youth community. The Think Project aims to give young white people in particular the space and opportunity to have those 'difficult conversations' about these topics, to hear their grievances and give them the tools and confidence to challenge those negative messages and to think for themselves.

The way in which we do this is also different, and we use skilled youth workers, able to understand and empathise with the disengaged young person, and bring in people with real life experience of having been at the receiving end of racism and hostility, including Muslims and asylum seekers...and it is this humanising approach which has been shown to be the most impactful in changing attitudes.

This report represents a key point in the development of the Think project, and we are very grateful to have already had the support of the Welsh Government as well as the Big Lottery Innovation Fund to get this project to its current stage. The willingness of such leading experts as Professors Ted Cantle and Paul Thomas to support our work adds even greater legitimacy and we hope will help us reach an even wider audience to spread news of our innovative approach and inspire others to adopt similar empowering, humanizing and non-punitive approaches to help the next generation to reject extremist messages.

Thank you for reading,

Momena Ali

Founder & Chair

Ethnic Youth Support Team

Rocio Cifuentes

Director

Foreword



The focus on our young people today is essential. We want current and future generations to celebrate and appreciate the diversity and rich mix of backgrounds, heritage and culture which make up our communities in 21st century Wales. We can all learn from each other and young people have a role to listen, to appreciate and to respect other people's experiences and diversity.

This Government has a vision for Wales to be inclusive, equal and fair. To make this happen eradicating hostility and prejudice is fundamental. We are clear that we want to promote messages of tolerance and respect.

We continue to support the links between tackling extremism and community cohesion. There are lessons to be learnt about how communities can build resilience to tackle extremism and to work with our young people to combat hatred in any form. It is important that we work together through trusting relationships to tackle extremist views. The Welsh Government's commitment to tackling all forms of hate can be seen in its Framework for Action for tackling hate crime and hate incidents. This will be published in Spring 2014.

The 'Think Project' being delivered by the Ethnic Youth Support Team through Big Lottery funding is an excellent example of a project working with young people in the community. The project provides important examples of how we can work and engage with our young people to challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes. I am pleased that the Welsh Government Community Cohesion Fund initially supported this project as a pilot and it is great to see how it has developed.

Focussing on work around prevention will help to ensure that we are making a longer term shift in terms of attitudes. This includes areas such as sport, media, culture and arts where young people can be influenced by the world around them and the messages and views which they see and hear. We want to work proactively to ensure that we are working in collaboration and focussing on positive role models and stories which celebrate the success of equality and diversity in Wales.

Jeff Cuthbert AM

Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Welsh Government

About This Report



We were both pleased to be invited by The Think Project and its parent organisation, the Ethnic Youth Support Team, to play the role of external advisors. The Think Project represents exactly the sort of preventative, educationally-based intervention with young people that we have both long advocated in the face of rising levels of hatred and fear towards 'other' communities within our society. The fact that the Think Project's anti-extremism work is so closely tied to wider Community Cohesion work, both within EYST's activities and within local and Welsh national policy efforts, makes this Big Lottery Fund-supported experimental project even more important for policy makers and practitioners, in Wales and across the UK.

The role we have been asked to play in relation to the Think Project combines external challenge and advice to the Project with external advocacy to policy-makers in relation to both the continuity and development of the Think project itself and the inspiration it offers for key policy agendas such as Equalities work and the 'Prevent' strategy.

To carry this role out, we have studied the work of the Think Project and consulted key stakeholders/partners, both within the Swansea area and across Wales. This resulting report draws on those external views and perceptions to discuss the social and policy context for the Think Project as currently constituted, and to propose ways in which the Think Project could and should develop and strengthen.

We believe that the Think Project is doing vital, inspiring educational work and that it should both be further supported and developed in Wales as well as used as inspiration for similar work in other countries of the UK

Professor Ted Cantle (ICOCO)

Professor Paul Thomas (University of Huddersfield)

CHALLENGING RACISM & FAR RIGHT EXTREMISM

TAKING THE **THINK PROJECT** FORWARD

*The need for preventative anti-
extremism educational work*



Contents

- 6 **Executive Summary**
- 7 **Background and Introduction to the Report**
- 10 **The Context for the Think Project**
- 13 **The Policy Context**
- 17 **The Think Project**
Progress to date/Future directions
- 19 **Conclusions and Recommendations**
Possible future developments
- 21 **Appendices:**
About Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST)
About the Authors
- 22 **Endnotes**

THINK

Executive Summary

The Think Project to date has been an outstanding success in its own terms, and has very strong local support in which it is regarded as an effective response to an identified and growing threat and need. It fits into, and extends, the concept and practice of community cohesion, in particular by taking cross-cultural and intercultural dialogue to new levels through an ambitious use of 'contact theory'.

It is an innovative and timely approach to tackling the intolerance and prejudice espoused by the Far Right and, in principle, offers the potential of wider applicability, both in geographic terms and the very conception of diversity and difference. The EYST team should be commended for their vision and commitment to this project and the Welsh Government and other agencies for their recognition of its potential and their continuing support to community cohesion.

The Think Project has obvious applicability to the Prevent agenda, but this depends upon whether both the Welsh and UK Governments are willing to invest in preventative, anti-Far Right measures and consider extending the techniques to other forms of extremism. There are already suggestions from local stakeholders that it should be extended to other areas of intolerance and hatred, for example in respect of Gypsies and Travellers, but we believe it could be used in many different contexts.

We believe that the Project now needs to be drawn to the attention of all key agencies and policy makers, with a view to considering its wider potential.

The Think Project is however very small and is sustained by a passionate and dedicated team who have been prepared to take risks to build their success. Extending the scheme will therefore need further support and a similar commitment to delivery. The success has therefore brought new challenges and dilemmas for EYST as they consider the requests to replicate and extend the Think Project's work.

For EYST, the first challenge is to identify how the Think Project can continue to operate as a distinct arm of its parent organisation EYST beyond its current Big Lottery Fund grant. In a continuing situation of tight public spending restrictions, this is obviously a challenge, but policy priorities in both the Welsh and UK Government environments could provide positive opportunities for the Think Project to present a strong business case.

The Think Project could develop an accredited franchise type model or adopt a 'training the trainers' approach running in-service training courses for key front-line professionals, supported by professionally-produced materials. However, this may significantly divert key staff away from successful delivery to young people. This approach should therefore only be considered if further, appropriate resources can be obtained for this distinct programme of work. More research on this and consultation with key agencies such as 'Re-wind' may help this consideration process.

In Wales, the new Welsh Government Hate Crime strategy (subject to consultation) and the Welsh approach (both regionally and nationally) to Prevent may lead to a new framework in which growing Far Right risks can be related and in which a strong case can be made for the Think Project continuing and being seen as a key part of the Welsh national policy response.

Given the ground breaking nature of the Think Project we see the potential for wider application, in both geographical terms – in the UK and beyond – and in terms of prejudice reduction work across many different divides. This firstly means that the potential has to be recognised by more and more agencies and secondly that resources will have to be secured to manage and sustain a development programme.

We hope that the Think Project and its partners will now adopt a wide range of measures to promote the Project to both existing and new audiences, through seminars and conferences, professional and academic articles and ongoing publicity using conventional and social media.



Background and Introduction to the Report



The 'Think' Project aims to challenge racism and far right extremism and increase young people's resilience to far right ideology

Initially funded by the Welsh government's Community Cohesion Fund, it is now grant funded over 3 years from April 2012-March 2015 by the Big Lottery Innovation Fund

It represents a new approach to the problem of preventing Far Right Extremism and reducing the support for it amongst white young people. Nearly all previous attempts to respond to the appeal of the Far Right have been by closing down debate rather than actually challenging their rhetoric, whilst the relatively new 'Prevent' programme across the UK has focused on Islamist extremism. This emerging practice in Swansea and South Wales is therefore highly relevant to policy-makers and practitioners across the whole of the UK.

The Think Project is a targeted rather than universal approach, using evidence of those factors that lead to far-right activity and support. The project is aimed at the most 'vulnerable' young people aged 14-25, referred from Alternative Education/ Youth Offending Service and through selection following engagement with local schools, the police and other agencies. It has therefore focused on reaching those who need it most - it is not 'preaching to the converted'. The Think Project has developed its own unique methodology, with Open Forum Workshops enabling open questions to be asked and with direct engagement with BME people including Muslims and Asylum Seekers/Refugees. It therefore deals directly with the most controversial issues representing the highest level of 'difficult conversation', challenging myths and prejudices through a humanising approach and a positive experience led by ethnically diverse tutors.

Stakeholders readily acknowledged that the project fills a gap - 'no-one else is doing it!', 'We don't know what to do with them' (Police Hate Crime Officer) – a view echoed by Schools, Youth Services, Councils and Anti-social behaviour Units.

The evaluation of the Think Project¹ described the programme of activity as 'structured workshops delivered over a four to six week period, based around core content mixed with open debate and practical tasks and covering a number of issues'.

The project's main aims have been set out as follows²:

1. Build mutual understanding and respect by providing tailored targeted workshops to directly challenge and deconstruct racist views;
2. Promote acceptance and integration by using experienced local trainers from BAME youth backgrounds to deliver the workshops and give the issues a human face; and
3. Build community resilience to problems and tensions by targeting the most disenfranchised young people within a community and enabling them to have a positive influence on their own peers, families, and communities.

Project Evaluation –‘Young People and the Think Project: Their Views’

The evaluator examined the initial views of the young people taking part in the Think Project. The young people were asked to complete a questionnaire at the beginning of their first session that explored their awareness of and attitudes towards different racial and religious groups, their perceived understanding of these issues within their own areas, and awareness and attitudes towards asylum seekers, racism and extremism. Their views were then re-examined after they had completed the programme and are set out below.

At the start of the Project:

- Nearly three quarters (74%) of all the young people said they had friends from different racial groups.
- Of those young people who provided an estimate of the percentage of people from a different ethnic background to their own, all but one put that estimate at 25% or more. Nearly half gave a figure of 50% or more and just short of one fifth gave a figure of 70% or more.
- 69% of young people agreed that *some racial or religious groups people are not liked by other groups of people in Swansea*.
- Just over three quarters (76%) of young people felt there was *hatred towards foreign workers coming into Swansea and Wales*.
- 46% of young people agreed with the statement that *asylum seekers come to the UK to get benefits*. Just under two fifths (38%) agreed with the statement that *asylum seekers should go back to where they came from*.



After the Project:

- In terms of racism nearly all young people (98%) felt that they had learnt something and when asked to describe racism young people did so in a far more varied way than just being mean about skin colour
- 76% of young people now estimated that the number of people living in Wales from an ethnic group different to their own at 10% or less. Half of young people put this figure at less than 5% of the population in Wales.
- All except one young person felt they had learnt something about asylum seekers. For most of these young people the key learning was described as learning that *asylum seekers come to the UK for safety*.
- Nearly all young people (98%) felt they had learnt something about extremism and defined it as *taking things too far*.
- 57% disagreed with the statements that 'There are too many people from different racial or religious communities living in my area' compared to 24% at the start
- 86% agreed with the statement that 'There's a lot to be learned from people with other cultures and backgrounds', compared to 59% at the start of the Project

Source: Young People and the Think Project: Their Views. (iworks, 2013)

EYST have thus been given the confidence to raise the profile of the project, broaden its influence and identify potential partners to assist with its development and/or replication in other parts of Wales, the UK or even further afield.

This report therefore examines the potential of the Project, both in its present form and as a basis for extension.

Methodology

This report has therefore been based upon the following approaches:

- **External Challenge:** to probe the aims and objectives, methodology and impacts of the work to date, in order to be able to contribute ideas for improvement/development; and thereby to help clarify the marketing messages
- **Make Connection with the Wider Policy and Practice Agenda:** To provide a supporting paper which sets out the importance of this work in the current policy context – e.g. growth of Far Right and Popular Extremism, Prevent, Community Cohesion, disaffection of young people, citizenship etc.; develop participation in regional and national events; identify synergies with wider strategic networks, bringing the programme to the attention of and facilitating discussions with high level Wales-wide, UK and European governmental and non-governmental organisations
- **Make Connection with the Academic Debate:** How this relates to academic debates about racism, diversity, globalisation, migration and with sociological, social psychological and anthropological theories – e.g. contact theory; strengthening the conceptualization of the programme as a resilience-building 'intervention'; prepare articles for publication in academic and policy journals
- **To advise and support local sustainability and impacts of change:** To connect the work with that of other mainstream organisations – e.g. school citizenship work and study; possible creation of peer mentors; programmes of YOTs, local authority and other agencies; and work of other voluntary agencies – e.g. Sports and cultural clubs, faith orgs
- **To advocate wider potential of project to national agencies, as appropriate:** Welsh and UK Governments (e.g. DCLG, Citizenship Unit, DFE); to draw the project to the attention of potential funders; and prepare blogs/twitter/social media campaign info

We have approached this in the following ways:

- reviewing EYST publications/reports and other documentary evidence
- meeting with EYST team and key stakeholders to build and challenge understanding
- Interviewing with local partners and reviewing stakeholder perceptions; and providing contextual analysis
- Reviewing local youth context and views and provide contextual analysis
- Providing initial lines of support narrative and advocacy - how, why, where it works; importance for local, national, international agencies

The Development of the Think Project

The Think Project is still relatively new. It is now in the second year of a 3 year project funded by the Big Lottery Innovation Fund. A report prepared by an external evaluator³ provides some very encouraging and positive evidence of success, providing a good platform on which to build.



The Context for the Think Project

This section examines the context for the Think Project in political, demographic and practical terms:

Diversity and Community Cohesion in Wales and the Swansea Area

The picture of diversity in Wales is distinctly different from that of England and the rest of the UK. The Welsh picture has recently been summarised⁴ thus:

In the 2011 census 93.2% of usual residents of Wales describe themselves as White British. Aside from these the next largest ethnicity include Indian (or British Indian), Polish, Irish, Chinese, African, Pakistani (or British Pakistani), White and Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi (or British Bangladeshi) all of which have more than 10,000 people living in Wales. This was the first census to record numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in Wales and the findings of 2,809 Gypsy or Irish Travellers in Wales may be an under count, with the Welsh Government 'Travelling to a Better Future' Framework estimating at least 4,000 Gypsies and Travellers living in Wales.

By comparison, diversity in England is more extensive. White British people make up just under 80% of England's population, with around 11 million people from minority backgrounds. This includes nearly 55,000 people of Gypsy or Traveller origin.

Looking across the English regions and Wales, London was the most ethnically diverse area, and Wales the least.

As noted by Cifuentes et al⁵ the fact that Wales's ethnic minority population is much smaller than England's means that it poses particular challenges. Nevertheless, in common with other areas, the vision, policy and practice of community cohesion needs to be constantly re-evaluated and developed.

Fortunately the Welsh Government has retained a strong vision for community cohesion in Wales⁶:

'Our vision for the future in Wales is that we value each other's differences and that different groups live alongside each other. We want everyone to get on together with a united goal for a better future for our communities and for Wales'.

However they recognise the challenges they face and that not all people believe that community relationships are harmonious:

'For most of us, Wales is a good place to live and work. The Living in Wales Survey 2007 asked if people agreed with these statements:

- This neighbourhood is a place where people from different backgrounds can live together in harmony. *76% agree*
- It is better for a country if there are a variety of different cultures. *58% agree*

Source: *Getting On Together: A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales*. Department for Social Justice & Local Government Welsh Assembly Government 2008

The Welsh Government supports the UK Government's formal definition of community cohesion:

"Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another".

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:

- people from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities;
- people knowing their rights and responsibilities; and
- people trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.

And three key ways of living together:

- a shared future vision and sense of belonging;
- a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside recognition of the value of diversity; and
- strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Source: *Getting On Together: A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales*. Department for Social Justice & Local Government Welsh Assembly Government 2008

Stakeholders indicated that Swansea and its neighbouring areas faced a number of current and difficult challenges as was evidenced by recent activity from the Far Right, including Welsh Defence League (WDL) protests; some street-level abuse and violence towards asylum seekers; some evidence of Muslim extremism; and strong opposition to traveller provision expressed through 'appalling comments' at local meetings and the organising of a local petition. Swansea has a relatively small minority population and this means

that in some areas the engagement between the local and migrant communities was very limited enabling myths and stereotypes to develop.

The recent WG Hate Crime Consultation Paper⁷ noted that there were a recorded number of 1,516 cases of hate crime in Wales during 2011, with Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) convicting 671 perpetrators in 2011/12. However, it was also noted that hate crime is still significantly under-reported across Wales and evidence suggests that it is more prevalent towards migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and Gypsy and Traveller communities and that there also continues to be low reporting across the protected characteristics of disability and gender identity.

The picture of community cohesion has been supported by a range of published research. Cifuentes et al noted⁸ that 'similarly negative attitudes exist in Wales as across the UK in general. In 2007, a Welsh Assembly Government- commissioned Living in Wales survey of approximately 7,500 households found that 12 percent of all respondents said they had suffered some form of discrimination, harassment, or victimization in the last five years. Almost a quarter of those respondents gave 'race' as the reason for their form of discrimination, victimization, or harassment. The survey further found the percentage of those male respondents aged 16 to 29 who suffered some form of discrimination, harassment, or victimization in the last five years more than doubled between 2005 and 2007, rising from 11 percent in 2005 to 24 percent in 2007'.

With regard to Swansea, Iqbal (2010)⁹; Whittaker and Cifuentes¹⁰; and Steele et al¹¹ have all contributed to the setting out of the cohesion challenges.

The challenges are also recognised by our interviewees:

'Overall Community cohesion in Swansea is good...however, a small minority get their voice heard – they tend to seize on isolated incidents' (South Wales Police (SWP) Prevent Officer).

There has been a 'gradual acceleration in diversity' in Swansea so that ethnic diversity is now a noticeable reality (Youth Offending Team (YOT) Officer).

The Community Cohesion Programme in Swansea is managed by the Community Regeneration Unit and is supported by a Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, one of nine posts funded across Wales to mainstream community cohesion. Stakeholders recognised that this change would be a challenge though the Community Cohesion programme is well supported at the political level with Cabinet members taking responsibility for key outcomes. Swansea City Council also responds to challenges with a task group to tackle cohesion issues and is conscious of the need to develop deeper change through early intervention, improving educational outcomes and reducing poverty and disadvantage. Like the Welsh Government it does not have a specific programme aimed at reducing Far Right support but it believes this support will be undermined by its wider programmes and activities. It is also supportive of the Think Project and recognises its further potential.

The recent WG consultation paper¹² (consultation ended on 18th October 2013) on hate crime had been developed through a Task and Finish Group across Welsh Government and statutory and voluntary partners, with extensive engagement across the protected characteristics of disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, however, set out to explore emerging areas 'across alternative subcultures, older people, 'mate' crime, cyber hate and far right extremism'. The framework intends to build on current practice and to explore actions across three objectives

around prevention, supporting victims and increasing the operational response. It is a very comprehensive proposed programme and contains very specific and useful practical guidance.

In this context, a number of objectives and proposed actions are highly relevant. For example, Objective 1 'Prevention: by challenging attitudes, raising awareness, early intervention' includes:

'promoting respect – tackling attitudes and stereotypes, begins in schools across a range of educational settings.

'promoting Inclusion and Resilience – working with our communities to increase understanding and resilience and support positive inclusion within community life across the protected characteristics which can challenge stereotypes'.

'delivering Fairness and Equality – a focus on community cohesion and the Equality Duty 'to promote good relations'.

In addition, Objective 2 'Supporting Victims: by increasing reporting levels, encouraging the further development of third party reporting centres and exploring support to victims' includes:

'exploring where increased support is required to increase reporting across communities and hotspots'.

The problem of Far Right extremism is explicitly recognised in the Consultation Paper and is underpinned by the Welsh Government commissioning research into Far Right Groups and Public Attitudes in Wales to understand the issues and dynamic of far right support and attitudes. This was due to be published in 2013. The Consultation Paper also, in general terms, endorses educational projects and the Think Project in particular:

'The development of educational programmes across Wales to work with communities and individuals who have committed a hate incident to identify early indicators of hate based attitudes will help to challenge and change attitudes at an early stage. This will include working with youth settings such as Youth Offending Service and Alternative Education and with Police to identify how pro-active work can be taken forwards. We will work with Big Lottery funded 'Think' Project delivered by the Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST) to understand the impacts of the pilot and to explore future preventative work with potential offenders'

The far-right and extremist activity and areas of vulnerability

The Far Right activity has been steadily growing in Wales, in common with England and the rest of Europe in recent years. This has involved both activity by 'traditional' far-right political groups (such as the BNP in Wales/UK) and emerging xenophobic and anti-Muslim street protest groups (Eatwell and Goodwin, 2010). The most significant example of the latter for both Wales and the UK has been the English Defence League and its offshoot the Welsh Defence League, organisations that have focussed on large-scale mobilisations and protests, rather than on building traditional political structures. Their rallies across the UK have seen significant displays of extreme racism and violence. There have been two WDL demonstrations in 2010, some BNP electoral success in 2011 and a 'White Pride' rally in Swansea in March 2013. As the WDL has declined, the 'South Wales Infidels' have emerged.

These political movements have focussed on what they term ‘Muslim extremism’, so providing a site for displays of racist hostility to Muslims, and to BME/Migrant communities more generally, with anti-immigration and anti-Muslim sentiments consistently appearing as widely felt concerns in public polling ¹³ (. Alongside this, as the 2011 UK Government Prevent Review identified, has been a continuing reality of terrorist trials and convictions of far-right individuals, people acting along in the actual planning of violence but often having clear connections to far-right groups. The internet-based links between Anders Breivik, the Norwegian far-right killer, and many far-right activists in the UK are also relevant here ¹⁴ . There is growing concern across Europe around the relationships between white racist attitudes to Muslims and new migrants, the growth of xenophobic/extremist street protest groups and far-right terrorism. A number of key informants in the Swansea area highlighted the recent conviction of a far-right extremist for racially-motivated murder and a terrorist bombing attempt in the West Midlands: *‘people who say that the far-right just wanted to shout on demonstrations.. well, that’s not true’* (Local Authority (LA) Prevent Officer).

Also relevant here is academic evidence that many people from white working class areas feel they are a “forgotten” community) and that sections of white working class communities are hostile to any contact with minority communities in a climate of growing inequality and relative poverty ¹⁵ . There is significant evidence that policy approaches around community cohesion and preventing extremism have only had a very limited impact on white communities and young people within them, something that the Think Project is designed to address. Highly relevant here is how monocultural, or ‘segregated’ many white housing areas are, how little contact they have with minority citizens and how easy it is for prejudiced, taken for granted attitudes to grow and harden in such conditions. Young people from largely monocultural white communities are felt to be most at risk and somewhat alarmingly, the pilot ‘Think’ Project found that 86% of young people agreed with the statement that ‘Asylum Seekers should be sent back to where they come from’, compared with 7% of a control group ¹⁶ .

Within this, the Think Project currently focusses on white young people viewed as vulnerable to far-right extremism beliefs and actions because of their wider social and educational ‘vulnerability. For key partner agencies, this focus is *‘ideal...they (Think Project) are getting the right people sat in front of them. Being selfish, that is where I would want them to work – they are the ‘go to’ organisation as a Prevent officer; I can go to them with varying levels of vulnerability (amongst identified individuals) and discuss how we should respond’* (South Wales Police (SWP) Prevent Officer).

White communities and young people, and the need for engagement

There have been policy and practice attempts in previous decades to effectively engage with and address racist attitudes and behaviour by white young people but the results have been mixed. Significant progress has been achieved in schools, colleges and youth projects, with many white young people displaying positive attitudes to ethnic diversity, and this should be acknowledged. However, it must also be acknowledged that policy has been ineffective and even on occasions counter-productive, as evidence from Greenwich, south east London, the site of the murder of Stephen Lawrence and other

Black young people has shown¹⁷. This ‘white backlash’ from some white young people who have reacted negatively to anti-racist/extremism educational approaches has been about the approach and assumptions of some of that work, and its failure to develop the skills and confidence of the practitioners being asked to implement it.

Much of Hewitt’s evidence echoed the findings of the ‘Burnage Inquiry’ ¹⁸ into the school-based murder in Manchester of a young Asian man by a white fellow pupil. Both critiques focussed on ‘clumsy’ attempts to implement anti-racism with white young people, with the approach too often being one of policing and disciplining the language, behaviour and attitudes of white young people, rather than opening up space of educational exploration and attitudinal change. This left some white young people feeling that they and their communities were being negatively judged and stigmatised, labelled as ‘racist’ when their feelings and self-perceived behaviour was rather more complex. Allied to this was a reality that teachers and youth workers have not felt trained and equipped to do genuine anti-racism/extremism work with white young people. Research with (mainly white) youth workers working with white young people in West Yorkshire ¹⁹ found that they were using ‘avoidance’ strategies in such situations, feeling that they lacked both the knowledge/confidence and support from managers to do such challenging work.

The possibilities of such work were demonstrated by a successful experimental youth project in south London that explicitly targeted white young people with strong racist views and behaviour but which engaged with them positively to take them through a process of experiential, attitudinal change, rather than ‘closing them down’ and condemning ²⁰ . Key to this work was a skilled and confident, multi-ethnic team of youth workers. Controversial here, though, was the funding for this project, the idea that preventative work with white young people is a wise investment rather than focussing all resources on BME groups dealing with the consequences of racist behaviour and extremism. Arguably, such funding is vital in a situation where many white communities and schools are monocultural and civil society within communities is weak – progressive anti-extremist attitudes will not naturally develop for many white young people and their communities, as EYST has acknowledged in establishing the Think Project ²¹ .

In this vacuum, far-right political organisations and their ideologues can influence young people, both through physical activities and through their presence on social media: *‘we can never underestimate the power of social media – that’s where they (young people) seem to build on their view... it hardens their ignorance to a degree’*(SWP Prevent Officer).

This need for educational anti-racist interventions is particularly acute with the sort of marginalised and disaffected young people that the Think Project has engaged with through alternative education provision, given that many of them come from ‘Communities First’ areas of multiple deprivation: *‘poverty is an issue and a factor... a lot of these groups can be quite vulnerable to questionable opinions and attitudes’* (Engaging Learners In Swansea (ELIS) co-ordinator). In marginalised, monocultural white communities, much of these racial prejudices amongst vulnerable young people *‘come through parents... and lazy, old-fashioned racism’ with families and communities’* (YOT Officer).

For the alternative education providers working with the Think Project, their partnership stems from an identified curriculum need: *‘we hadn’t come across anyone teaching them about different ethnic backgrounds or religions’* and whilst *‘Swansea is changing... all of the schools in Swansea now have an element of diversity but not ELIS currently’* (ELIS co-ordinator).



The Policy Context

Community Cohesion and Extremism – New Approaches

Community cohesion emerged as a new policy framework in 2001, following the riots in a number of towns in northern England²² and began to transform the way in which intolerance and prejudice – including extreme views - were addressed.

Previous policy had focused almost entirely on addressing the disadvantage and inequalities faced by minorities to enable them to compete on equal terms. Structural disadvantage was perceived to be the main cause of ‘racial’ prejudice and Government policies sought to address this through a series of anti-discrimination measures over several decades²³. The policy and practice of community cohesion also retained a strong focus on tackling inequalities which became one of four key tenets of cohesion in the first formal definition adopted by both statutory and voluntary agencies²⁴. The Welsh Government has arguably adopted an even more robust approach to tackling disadvantage, ensuring that a series of anti-poverty measures are central to its cohesion strategy²⁵. Nevertheless, in parts of the academic community the new policy of community cohesion was seen as an attempt to move away from the traditional multicultural framework based upon tackling inequalities and it was very sceptical about the focus on cross-community relations and intercultural contact²⁶. These fears have, however, been strongly repudiated by new academic evidence of community cohesion in practice, which demonstrates that inter-community relationships can be improved as part of wider approaches to increase the sense of belonging, value all aspects of diversity and tackle disadvantage (see Thomas, 2011²⁷ and Jones 2013²⁸). In practice too, the Welsh experience and that of many individual local authority strategies in England and Wales demonstrates that cohesion work clearly retains and embraces a focus on structural disadvantage.

However, the significance of the introduction of community cohesion was not so much over the then disputed claims about the continued focus on inequalities, as the entirely new approach to building better inter-community relations. This was twofold. Firstly, through interpersonal ‘strong and positive relationships... developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods’ and secondly by building a wider ‘sense of belonging for all communities’ in which ‘the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued’²⁹. This entailed attempting to change peoples’ attitudes towards the ‘other’ and more generally the way in which they thought about diversity and difference.

This was perhaps an even more radical approach than had been originally envisaged as it not only entailed attempting to reverse long held prejudices and discriminatory behaviour, but also sought to enter into dialogue in areas where such debate had been previously closed down. In particular, the rhetoric of the Far Right had been considered so toxic that the press and media were often prevailed upon to ‘deny it the oxygen of publicity’. This attitude still prevails to some extent at least and was perhaps encapsulated in the debate about whether Nick Griffin, the leader of the BNP, should appear on BBC Question Time on the 22nd October 2009. A number of multicultural theorists still seemed to labouring under the view that Britain had not matured into a nation which was able to discuss – and largely refute – such extremist views. Indeed, the closing down of such debates actually tended to add to the support for the Far Right who were able to claim that they were being denied any platform and were the victims of oppressive ‘political correctness’.

Fortunately, community cohesion was gaining considerable support at national and local level and more and more ‘difficult conversations’ were taking place and, as a result of the wider approach of cohesion which embraced aspects of diversity, were in no way confined to ‘race’ and ethnicity. These were also supported by ‘belonging campaigns’ often built around local place and supported by positive pictures of diversity. However, the practice of ‘cross-community’ or ‘intercultural’ dialogue tended to remain cautious, heeding the advice of the early advocates of ‘contact theory’, like Allport³⁰. His hypothesis was that by bringing together the members of different groups, getting them working towards common goals on an equal footing, would lead to intergroup prejudice being reduced. More recently, contact theory has been developed and championed by Miles Hewstone *et al*³¹ and this has clearly demonstrated that contact between groups does bring about positive (or at least less negative) attitudes and reduces prejudice. This approach has been applied to reducing sectarian conflict (in Northern Ireland), homophobic attitudes as well as ethnic prejudices. Hewstone also maintains that the type of contact, and the conditions under which it occurs, are all important and warns that if these are not optimal they can lead to an increase in prejudice.

The Think Project takes ‘contact theory’ to a new level in which ‘difficult conversations’ form the main focus. It appears to challenge the established guidance in that the participants are not ‘on an equal footing’ and are less obviously able to take part in the creation of ‘common goals’. Indeed participants are actively encouraged to ‘tell it like it is’ and expose their prejudices. What could be a highly confrontational series of exchanges are nevertheless turned into constructive and, often emotional, experiences in which views about the ‘other’ are confounded by information and direct engagement with those that were previously seen in stereotypical and derogatory terms. The reason for the success of the Project breaking new ground and its further potential are discussed in Section 4 below.

Community Cohesion and Integration – Wales and England

Unlike England, the Welsh Government (WG) has continued to focus on and actively develop, its community cohesion strategy and its approach is increasingly distinct from the policy in England. Whilst much of the strategy is devolved to local authorities, the WG continues to support a wide range of Wales-wide initiatives. *Community Mapping and Tension Monitoring Guidance* was published in 2011 and the Welsh Government’s *Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives*, published in the following year. The Welsh Government has also produced the *Communities First* programme to support the most disadvantaged groups in the most deprived areas of Wales with the aim of contributing to alleviating persistent poverty and tackling the cause of poverty.

The 2009 Community Cohesion Strategy in Wales *Getting on Together* continues to offer a framework to support the promotion of equality, social inclusion and community cohesion. This was updated with an Action Plan in 2013 with the aim of ensuring future sustainability. Schools have also been guided by *Respect and Resilience: Developing Community Cohesion – a Common Understanding for Schools and their Communities* and in respect of FE by *Creating Safe Learning Communities: Guidance for Further Education Institutions* in Wales, both in 2011.

Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinators have been funded to work across local authorities and have a strategic role to tackle hate incidents and crime. There is also guidance on *Mainstreaming Community Cohesion: A Practical Guide* (2012) and most recently a new consultation paper on *Tackling Hate Crime and Incidents: A Framework for Action*. This provides a comprehensive and ambitious approach to improving cohesion and it also builds upon other reports to emphasise that cohesion embraces all of the ‘protected characteristics’, including Race, Religion and belief, Disability, Sexual Orientation and Transgender.

The interviewees were all familiar with the approach taken by the Welsh Government and were keen to emphasise the broader nature of the policy. However it was accepted that there had as yet been little by way of a specific focus on tackling prejudice and intolerance in communities where support for the Far Right was particularly evident

‘They (Welsh government) are very passionate about it... they’ve got it right in that they recognise the need and there is a willingness to benchmark and support’ (LA Prevent Officer).

The Think Project benefited from the strong and continuing commitment to community cohesion and received funding from the Welsh Government initially as part of a series of pilot and innovative schemes.

In contrast to the active and continuing support by the Welsh Government, the approach in England has become far more muted. The Coalition Government has taken very few steps to improve community cohesion since taking office in 2010 and its policy paper³² prefers the concept of ‘integration’. This approach simply pushes responsibility on to individual local authorities, many of whom have retained a commitment to cohesion, but are given very little encouragement and have seen both their specific funding removed and general resources eroded. Some central initiatives in respect of *Prevent* have however been retained (see below).

Prevent – Wales, England and UK

Initiated in 2007, the Prevent strategy is the main policy vehicle for addressing and preventing support for terrorism and ideologies that promote it. Understandably, Prevent has prioritised the threat of Islamist terrorism, but the policy approach up until the Home Office Prevent Review and revised Prevent Strategy³³ of only focussing on Islamist extremism and so engaging only with Muslim communities was controversial. Many people felt that this was not addressing far-right racist extremism and terrorism, or the relationship between different forms of extremism³⁴. The Prevent Review acknowledged this and has opened up the possibility of Prevent engaging with white far-right/racist extremism and terrorism alongside its established focus. The social and political pressures outlined above have strengthened calls for Prevent to address such threats.

Prevent is a ‘reserved power’ and is directed by the UK government through its Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT), but this broad reality still allows the Welsh Government and its local authority and Police partners to agree specific directions and approaches for Prevent in Wales. Here, the significance of the far-right racist threat in the Swansea/Western Bay area of South Wales had already been acknowledged in Wales’s approach to Prevent before 2011 and the UK Government Review has given confirmation of this need to focus on the most challenging local/regional extremist threat. This means that the Think Project is seen by key partners as an important part of the wider Prevent policy response now and has the potential to play a stronger role going forward: ‘we try to approach it (Prevent) by working with partners who work within communities’ (LA Prevent Officer).

This clear potential role for the Think Project within Swansea and Wales’s Prevent programme has been highlighted by Think Project staff themselves within an academic consideration of the Project. Here, the Think Project is ‘a strategy for preventing far-right extreme attitudes developing in Swansea... its uniqueness lies in it being able to fulfil much of the UK government’s Prevent strategy goals, such as building community resilience and disrupting the activities of those trying to recruit vulnerable people’.³⁵

It is also a good ‘model’ for other areas of the UK to consider in terms of Prevent-directed preventative educational responses to the growing far-right/racist extremism threat.

The need for Prevent in Swansea to focus on far-right extremism is identified by key agencies:

‘the emerging threat appears to be from extreme right-wing groups... locally it’s identified as our emerging threat and our emerging issue... so naturally the focus is on that... this is borne out by our number of referrals where probably the majority are extreme right-wing’ (SWP Prevent Officer).

This threat is illustrated by the fact that the last four far-right demonstrations/rallies in South Wales have been held in Swansea: ‘the support, the people and the logistics are around Swansea’ (SWP Prevent Officer). The reality of this local threat picture means that ‘we have always been very explicit from the outset that it (Prevent) is about all forms of extremism’ (LA Prevent Officer).

Here, such events and private meetings have not only been a focal point for Welsh extremists, but have also involved ‘a number of people coming from outside Wales...known people (activists) from areas such as the West Midlands’ (LA Prevent Officer).

Alongside the racist and Islamophobic focus exhibited by these groups across the UK, such far-right groups have actively seized on local/regional issues and contributed to the inflaming of public opinion regarding diversity. An example is their interventions around Swansea’s current deliberations over new sites for Travellers. This has involved: ‘known right-wing individuals who are seizing that as an opportunity’ and contributing to the issue being ‘very emotive, very divisive’ (LA Prevent Officer).

One of the most significant criticisms of Prevent across the UK in its original 2007-2011 iteration was its apparently problematic relationship with the parallel policy agenda of community cohesion. The response of the 2011 Prevent Review was to create a clear policy separation in England, even though such a split is arguably neither desirable nor achievable at the operational level³⁶). However, in Wales ‘Prevent is seen differently’ and it ‘is the recognised policy of the Welsh Government that Prevent and community cohesion work together, that they see overlap between the two policies... there needs to be separation but with that separation should come communication.’ (SWP Prevent Officer). From this perspective, local authority staff working on community cohesion are ‘vital partners’ for Prevent-focussed staff.

For key local agencies in Swansea and the Western Bay area, the Think Project already contributes to the Prevent strategy and has the potential to play an increasingly stronger role. Here, the Think Project ‘adds to both... (community cohesion and Prevent)... in some areas it will have an effect on cohesion. Certainly it’s got a part to play in Prevent – people who are on the lower level of extreme right-wing thinking or behaviour, it’s a fantastic programme to put them through, whether is the full 10 weeks/3 days programme or something bespoke (for the individual) (SWP Prevent Officer).

Locally in the Swansea/Western Bay area, ‘we approach Prevent very much from (the) safeguarding’ (approach) (LA Prevent Officer). This focus on vulnerability to extremism amongst young people encourages a focus on educational/ diversionary responses and agencies that can provide such interventions.

Key here is the potential for Prevent structures to refer individuals into the Think Project and its parent EYST: ‘In the future, I hope it’s something that we could refer in to’ (SWP Prevent Officer).

For such referrals to happen through the Channel Partnership process, Think project/EYST would need to be on the Home Office OSCT’s list of ‘approved intervention providers’. This is something that Think/EYST has already started to consider and ‘for my mind they would certainly fit the criteria – the knowledge and skills needed are within the organisation’ (SWP Prevent Officer).

The Think Project

Progress to date and future directions



The Think Project's current programme

The current Think Project approach of focusing on 'vulnerable' young people was supported by key partner agencies as a continuing need. In many cases, this 'vulnerability' is not overtly racist but is identified by 'an underlying perceptions of a young person's disposition' to difference in wider society (YOT Officer). Currently, such 'vulnerable' young people are worked with by the Think Project through alternative education provision, alongside a developing interest in receiving referrals through Swansea YOT and the Prevent Channel partnership. Given the economic and social circumstances of the communities that many of these young people live in, this targeting can be seen as a pragmatic recognition of which young people may face wider pressures that make them vulnerable to extremist messages and beliefs. It is also a pragmatic approach to finding suitable delivery sites for the programme.

Whilst the Think Project programme is imaginative and pedagogically sound, it is clear that the real strengths are in the face to face delivery – who delivers it and how they go about it – rather than in the unique nature of the curriculum itself. That perspective is reflected in the section below on the Think Project's USP and its potential for future development, where key partners identify the strengths as the charismatic programme leadership and their utilisation of real people from diverse backgrounds. It is clear that the Think Project delivery team of Nicky and Chris (and previously Momena) work very well together, complementary styles and personalities, and living evidence of cohesion and multicultural friendship. Crucial within this is the willingness of the trainers to use their own lives, values and experiences as educational tools, supported by the highly effective use of guest speakers who are individuals with experience of being asylum seekers or new migrants and who are also willing to share their own personal stories.

The clear and unprompted testimonials that a range of key partner agencies give to the Think Project programme and delivery is supported by strong evidence from the iWorks evaluation of the Project to date (briefly summarised in Section 1), and leads to our clear view on the future options for the Projects' sustainability and development, as suggested below.

The Think Project's Potential

A key role of the external challenge and advisory role that this report represents was to help the Think Project identify options for the continued sustainability of the Project beyond current Big Lottery Fund support. The dilemmas here can be recognised as project/business development challenges, options made possible by the clear, strong success of the Think Project to date in the eyes both of the young people taking part and the key partners engaging in the delivery, the Project Steering Group, and EYST/Think Project events, such as the October 2013 Cardiff Conference. What is the Think Project's USP and how can it be both maintained and developed? Key challenges and options can be identified as follows:

- **The audience** – should the Think Project continue to focus on 'vulnerable' young people for the reasons outlined above and accessed through alternative education provision and by increasing numbers of 'referrals' from YOTs and Prevent/Channel, or instead should it look to develop a wider involvement in mainstream High Schools and Colleges?
- **The geographical target area** – should the Think Project continue to focus primarily on the Swansea/Western Bay area or should it expand operations across South Wales? To what extent do the Project and its key personnel have the capacity to expand, given the travel times involved? Would such an expansion undermine their strong work involvements in Swansea?
- **The message** – should the Think Project continue to focus on addressing and countering the messages and ideologies directed at vulnerable white young people by far-right extremist groups and movements, or should it widen its curricular focus to broader issues of prejudices and inequality in society?
- **The medium** – should the Think Project continue to operate through direct delivery by its highly-effective and experienced team of trainers, or should it shift its focus to producing teaching packs/DVDs disseminated through a 'training the trainers' approach? Is there a middle way of recruiting more trainers with the right skills, personality and personal 'back story'?

There was a clear consensus from the key partners and stakeholders consulted that the Think Project should continue to prioritise work with 'vulnerable' young people and should explore further development of referrals of such individuals or groups from partner agencies. For instance, whilst the Youth Offending Team has few young people involved in racially aggravated offences, many clients fit the 'vulnerable' to racist attitudes and behaviour category as part of their wider 'vulnerability'. Working with such individuals via Swansea YOT or with the growing number of group work settings that the YOT are developing is a potential avenue for development. Here, the pending Swansea YOT amalgamation with Neath /Port Talbot and Bridgend YOTS provides potential economies of scale for input and co-ordination. Whilst this definition of 'vulnerability' utilised by the Think Project generally is open to debate, it crucially avoids the labelling of individual white young people as 'racist', something that has proved highly counter-productive in previous anti-racist educational programmes, as discussed above.

The potential for the Think Project to contribute to Prevent and its Channel Partnership, and to wider safeguarding policy approaches to vulnerable young people and young adults was highlighted by key respondents:

'Does the Think Project see themselves as a reactionary intervention provider that tries to disrupt those (extremist) ideologies?...By providing that intervention and counter-narrative...they could provide a huge amount of support through one-to-one work' (LA Prevent Officer).

There were also clear views on whether it is advisable for the Think Project to broaden into a more general provider of anti-racist education within mainstream schools and colleges: *'I don't want them to lose sight of what the Think Project is all about...they could provide a huge amount of support for individuals... from a variety of backgrounds' (LA Prevent Officer).* Whilst badly needed, some mainstream anti-racist work in schools can involve *'preaching to the converted – the Think Project is reaching out to people who aren't being reached'* (YOT Officer).

At the same time, agencies acknowledged that *'long-term, there is a need for this (anti-racist educational programmes) in the school curriculum more generally'* (ELIS co-ordinator). The key issue though is whether the Think Project has the capacity to engage in mainstream education, even just within the Swansea area, without significantly undermining their current focus on vulnerable young people, let alone developing it further in the way that key partner agencies hope is possible. Here, can the Think Project inspire and advise on a strengthening of anti-racist education within mainstream schooling, rather than lead on it?

One possible approach considered for the future development and continuation of the Think Project is to step back from direct delivery and concentrate on 'training the trainers', possibly supported by high-quality DVD material. However, key Think Project partners were not convinced that this approach would maintain the current educational impact: *'what works is that engagement with Nicky or Chris or Momena – that's what sticks in the young people's minds: In many cases, this is the first time young people have ever spoken to an Asian person.... One of the most successful things they've used is bringing real people in who can tell their own story'* (ELIS co-ordinator). Here, the 'training the trainers' approach would *'dilute the impact... it would have an impact but wouldn't be as effective'* (ELIS co-ordinator), and *'as it stands, it (Think Project) is highly effective – we risk damaging it by stretching it or changing it'* (YOT Officer). Indeed, the Think Project itself identified a key aim as being work which will *'promote acceptance and integration by using experienced local trainers from BAME youth backgrounds to deliver the workshops and give the issues a human face'*.³⁷

Some interviewees also thought that the project could be applied to other groups, for example to Gypsy and Traveller groups where local prejudices were seen to be highly charged.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Possible future developments



This final section offers some conclusions and provides recommendations on how the Think Project can be both sustained and developed beyond its current Big Lottery Fund support and remit, and on how the Think Project can and should respond to the strong interest in its work, both now and in the future.

Firstly, it is clear from both the ongoing, independent evaluation³⁸ and from the consultations with key partners and stakeholders reported above that the Think Project to date has been an outstanding success in its own terms, and that it has very strong support as an effective response to an identified and growing threat and need. As reported in Section 4, this success has now brought new challenges and dilemmas through requests to replicate and extend the Think Project's work, approach and delivery in both different locations and with different audiences to this currently targeted.

Secondly, it is an innovative and timely approach to tackling the intolerance and prejudice espoused by the Far Right and, in principle, offers the potential of wider applicability, both in geographic operational terms and in terms of inspiring and guiding similar policy responses in other parts of the UK.

Continuity of the Think Project: Considerations for external partners/stakeholders

The first challenge is to identify how the Think Project can continue to operate as a distinct arm of its parent organisation EYST beyond its current BLF funding. In a continuing situation of tight public spending restrictions, this is obviously a challenge, but **policy priorities in both the Welsh and UK Government environments provide positive opportunities for the Think Project to present a strong business case.** Here, the new Welsh Government Hate Crime strategy (subject to consultation) and the Welsh approach (both regionally and nationally) to Prevent may create a framework in which growing Far Right risks can be related and in which a strong case can be made for the Think Project continuing and being seen as a key part of the Welsh national policy response. **Part of the case to be made here is about the risk to these regional and national policy efforts of the Think Project disappearing after its strong contribution:** It was acknowledged that *'if the Think Project stopped tomorrow, there would be a huge gap' for both Prevent and Community cohesion strategies in the Swansea area: 'EYST and Think are an integral part of the solution'* (LA Prevent Officer).

Here, the Think Project and its parent EYST is well-placed to respond to the close Welsh policy relationship between Community Cohesion and Prevent, and the strong focus on far-right extremism as a significant identified threat for Prevent in Wales. **For this desire in Swansea and Wales for Think Project continuity to be achieved, the Think Project/EYST need to prioritise continuing efforts to make key political actors and stakeholders across the Swansea/Western Bay region and Wales as a whole more aware of its approach and successes, and to so make the case for future support.** This suggests that further conferences/seminars may be helpful, and that meetings/briefing sessions with individual AMs and Welsh Government ministers and officials about Think's work should be prioritised.

The Scope and Remit of the Think Project: Considerations for EYST

For this case for future support, both regionally and nationally, to be made effectively, there needs to be clarity over the scope and remit of the Think Project. Our consultations clearly indicate that the USP, the real and distinct strengths, of the Think Project are the skills and the educational approach of the delivery team and the focus of their delivery on engaging positively with 'vulnerable' young white people. **This indicates that this approach and content should be maintained and that any alterations or deviations should be very carefully considered. Here, taking the same targeted work approach to groups of 'vulnerable' young people over a wider geographical area of Wales, so becoming more genuinely a 'national' resource, seems to be potentially sustainable, whereas expanding operations to try and contribute to education within mainstream schools and colleges would possibly undermine the current successful work approach and impacts.**

There may well be a need for enhanced anti-extremist/anti-racist educational approaches within mainstream education but the Think Project should mainly be an inspiration, rather than focussed on delivery at this stage.

One potential way of contributing to broader anti-racist educational efforts more widely is for the Think Project to adopt a 'training the trainers' approach of running accredited, in-service training courses for key front-line professionals, supported by professionally-produced materials. **However, engaging in a 'training the trainers' approach currently would significantly divert key staff away from successful delivery to young people. This approach should therefore only be considered if further, appropriate resources can be obtained for this distinct programme of work.** Even if such funding is potentially available, the Think Project should very carefully consider whether such a dissemination approach is a priority, and to what extent their strong educational delivery approach to targeted, vulnerable young people can be replicated or controlled through such a 'training the trainers' approach. More research on this and consultation with other agencies engaged in anti-prejudice work may help this consideration process.

The Inspiration of the Think Project

An alternative approach to disseminating the approach of and learning from the Think Project is to seek to inspire other policy-makers and practitioners, both in Wales and particularly in other nations of the UK, rather than training/accrediting them. Since the 2011 Prevent Review, Prevent is now focussing on a range of extremist threats, including the growing far-right threat. **Therefore, the Think Project's role could be to inspire and inform national and regional policy-makers involved in Prevent (and in local cohesion/Integration and Youth Offending policy practice) about approaches to anti-extremism work with white young people.**

We have noted earlier the ground breaking nature of the Think Project and therefore also see the potential for wider application, in both geographical terms – in Wales, in the UK and beyond – and in terms of prejudice reduction work across many different divides. This firstly means that the potential has to be recognised by more and more agencies and secondly that resources will have to be secured to manage and sustain a development programme.

This can be done through a wide range of measures to promote the Think Project to both existing and new audiences, through seminars and conferences, professional and academic articles and ongoing publicity using conventional and social media. The external support and guidance to be provided during 2014 by the report's authors will significantly help with this process.

Appendices:



About EYST

Ethnic Youth Support Team is a voluntary organisation and registered charity based in Swansea which aims to support ethnic minority young people aged 11-25, and their families, living in Wales. It was established in 2005 by and for young ethnic minority people and aims to providing culturally appropriate support and services to enable young ethnic minority people to achieve their full potential in the areas of education, employment, health and community safety. We also aim to increase understanding amongst the general public of BME young people, challenge negative stereotypes and improve community cohesion.

We do this through employing a team of youth and family workers who provide direct and culturally appropriate support to BME young people around education, employment, health and community safety, providing mentoring, guidance and advice, both through one-to-one and group based work. We run a state of the art youth drop in centre in central Swansea which is open daily after-school, and offer outreach sessions to local schools and colleges providing support and home-school liaison.

We also work directly with the families of BME young people, offering support to increase their understanding of the education system, health system, or around cultural variations in parenting styles for example, liaising with agencies such as social services and schools as necessary. We also offer family mediation to help families and young people overcome cultural conflict which may be negatively impacting on a child's schooling or decisions about entering further education, for example.

We also deliver a broad and successful programme of educational anti-racism awareness to the wider youth community, delivering regular diversity, cultural awareness and Islamophobia sessions within local schools, colleges and youth groups across South Wales, which greatly increases young people's understanding of diversity, Islam, asylum and so on.

EYST's work has been recognised for its quality and impact, and we have won several awards including Local Community Regeneration Awards prize for Best Project, and Welsh Government Youth Work Award for Best Youth Centre Project.

Email: info@eyst.org.uk Web: www.eyst.org.uk

About the Authors

Professor Ted Cantle was appointed by the UK Home Secretary to chair the Community Cohesion Review Team and to lead the review on the causes of the summer disturbances in a number of English northern towns and cities. The subsequent 'Cantle Report' established the concept of community cohesion and heralded an entirely new approach to race and community relations.

Ted has worked with many local authorities and statutory and voluntary agencies, advising on cohesion policy and practice, both in the UK and in other countries.

Ted has contributed over 200 articles, for academic, professional and policy publications on a wide range of subjects. He has also written two books (published by Palgrave Macmillan) These are: *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity* (published 2005 and reprinted and updated 2008). In his latest book, *Interculturalism The new era of cohesion and diversity* (2012) Ted argues that the old multicultural paradigms must be replaced by a new intercultural framework, a framework for managing community relations in a world defined by globalisation and super-diversity,

Ted chairs the iCoCo Foundation and can be contacted on tedcantle@icocofoundation.com

Professor Paul Thomas is Professor of Youth and Policy at the School of Education, University of Huddersfield. Paul's research has focussed on how policies such as community cohesion and Prevent have been implemented in work with young people and how policy and practice can be more effective. Paul's research has been developed in close collaboration with local authorities and their key, ground-level staff such as Youth Workers. It has led to the books *Youth, Multiculturalism and Community Cohesion* (Palgrave, 2011) and *Responding to the Threat of Violent Extremism –Failing to Prevent* His current research looks at feelings and attitudes within marginalised white communities in the north of England.

Paul is a qualified youth worker, has previously been involved in anti-racist work with both young people and football fans and has also worked on youth issues for the government's Commission for Racial Equality.

Email: d.p.thomas@hud.ac.uk

Endnotes

- 1 Lake, L (2013) Young People and the Think Project: Their Views iworks (2013)
- 2 Cifuentes R , Whittaker G and Lake L (2013) *The Think Project: An Approach to Addressing Racism and Far-Right Extremism in Swansea, South Wales*, Democracy and Security, 9:3, 304-325, DOI: 10.1080/17419166.2013.802985
- 3 Lake, L (2013) Young People and the Think Project: Their Views iworks (2013)
- 4 Welsh Assembly Government (2013) Tackling Hate Crime and Incidents: A Framework for Action, Online at : <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/equality/130711-hate-crime-framework-consul/?lang=en>
- 5 Cifuentes R , Whittaker G and Lake L (2013) *The Think Project: An Approach to Addressing Racism and Far-Right Extremism in Swansea, South Wales*, Democracy and Security, 9:3, 304-325, DOI: 10.1080/17419166.2013.802985
- 6 Department for Social Justice& Local Government Welsh Assembly Government (2008) *Getting On Together: A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales*. Cardiff: Department for Social Justice & Local Government Welsh Assembly Government
- 7 Welsh Government (2013) Tackling Hate Crime and Incidents: A Framework for Action, Online at <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/equality/130711-hate-crime-framework-consul/?lang=en>
- 8 Cifuentes R , Whittaker G and Lake L (2013) *The Think Project: An Approach to Addressing Racism and Far-Right Extremism in Swansea, South Wales*, Democracy and Security, 9:3, 304-325, DOI: 10.1080/17419166.2013.802985
- 9 Iqbal, S. (2010) *Which way now for community cohesion in Swansea? A report on the views of community organisations*, Research conducted for CCS by Swansea Bay Racial Equality Council.
- 10 Whittaker, G. and Cifuentes, R. (2011) *Understanding the Challenges and Solutions for Community Cohesion in Swansea*, Community Cohesion Event Report April 2011, Swansea: Ethnic Youth Support Team.
- 11 Andy Steele, Lisa Scullion and Gareth Morris (2012) Community Mapping and Research into Community Tensions Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit University of Salford. April 2012
- 12 Welsh Government (2013) Tackling Hate Crime and Incidents: A Framework for Action, Online at <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/equality/130711-hate-crime-framework-consul/?lang=en>
- 13 Goodwin, M.J. and Harris, G., 2013. Rallying intolerance in the valleys: Explaining support for the extreme right in Wales *British Politics*. 8(4), 433-456
- 14 Thomas, P. (2012) *Responding to the Threat of Violent Extremism – Failing to Prevent?* London: Bloomsbury Academic
- 15 Thomas, P. and Sanderson, P., (2013) 'Crossing the Line? White young people and Community Cohesion'. *Critical Social Policy*, 33 (1). pp. 160-180
- 16 Lake, L. (2013) *Young People and the Think Project: Their Views*, iworks
- 17 Hewitt, R. (2005) *White Backlash: The politics of Multiculturalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- 18 Macdonald, I. (1989) *Murder in the playground – the report of the Macdonald Inquiry*, Manchester: Longsight Press
- 19 Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) (1999) *Open Talk, Open Minds*, London: CRE
- 20 Dadzie, S. (1997) *Blood, Sweat and Tears*, Leicester: Youth Work Press
- 21 Cifuentes, R., Whittaker, G.R. & Lake, L. (2013) The Think Project: An Approach to Addressing Racism and Far-Right Extremism in Swansea, South Wales, *Democracy and Security*, 9:3, 304-325, DOI: 10.1080/17419166.2013.802985
- 22 Cantle, T. (2001) *Community Cohesion: A Report of the independent Review Team* (London: Home Office).
- 23 For a fuller discussion see Cantle T., (2008) *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity*. (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke). Revised and updated edition 2008.
- 24 Local Government Association et al (LGA) (2002). *Guidance on Community Cohesion*. LGA: London
- 25 Department for Social Justice& Local Government Welsh Assembly Government (2008) *Getting On Together: A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales*. Cardiff: Department for Social Justice & Local Government Welsh Assembly Government
- 26 Cantle T., (2012) *Interculturalism: The New Era of Cohesion and Diversity*. (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke)
- 27 Thomas, P., (2011). *Youth, Multiculturalism and Community Cohesion*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke
- 28 Jones, H. (2013) *Negotiating Cohesion, Inequality and Change: Uncomfortable Positions in Local Government* (Policy Press: Bristol)
- 29 Local Government Association et al (LGA) (2002). *Guidance on Community Cohesion*. LGA: London
- 30 Allport, G. W., (1954) *The Nature of Prejudice*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley)
- 31 Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., Voci, A. Hamberger, J. and Neins, U. (2006) Intergroup Contact, Forgiveness and Experience of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Social Issues* 62 (1), 99–120: Hewstone, M., Paolini, S., Cairns, E., Voci, A. and Harwood, J. (2006a) 'Intergroup Contact and the Promotion of Intergroup Harmony', in *Social Identities: Motivational, Emotional, Cultural Influences*, Brown R. J. and Capozza, D. eds (Hove, England: Psychology Press); Hewstone, M., Tausch, N., Hughes, J. and Cairns, C. (2007) 'Prejudice, intergroup contact and identity: Do neighbourhoods matter?' In M. Wetherell, M. Laffleche and R. Berkeley (eds.) *Identity, Ethnic Diversity and Community Cohesion*. (London: Sage); Hewstone, M., Kenworthy, J., Cairns, E., Tausch, N., Hughes, J., Voci, A., von Hecker, U., Tam, T. and Pinder, C. (2008) 'Stepping stones to reconciliation in Northern Ireland: Intergroup contact, forgiveness and trust' in J.D. Fisher et al. (eds.) *The Social Psychology of Inter-Group Reconciliation*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., Tausch, N., Hughes, J. (2008a) 'Can Contact Promote Better Relations? Evidence From Mixed and Segregated Areas of Belfast' *Report to the Community Relations Unit, Northern Ireland*. Available at: <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/gr-pubs>
- 32 Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2012) *Creating the Conditions for Integration* (London: DCLG)
- 33 Her Majesty's Government (2011) *Prevent Strategy*, London: The Stationary Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy>
- 34 Eatwell, R. and Goodwin, M. (eds.) (2010) *The new Extremism in 21st Century Britain*, Abingdon: Routledge
- 35 Cifuentes, Whittaker and Lake, 2013: 305
- 36 Thomas, P. (2012) "Prevent and Community Cohesion—Synergy or Conflict?," paper presented at British International Studies Association Critical Terrorism Studies Working Group Conference, September 6, Kings College, London
- 37 Cifuentes, Whittaker and Lake, 2013:314
- 38 Lake, L (2013) *Young People and the Think Project: Their Views*, iworks



WWW.EYST.ORG.UK | INFO@EYST.ORG.UK